

VZCZCXRO6755
PP RUEHCHI RUEHFK RUEHHM RUEHKSO RUEHPB
DE RUEHWL #0852 3052020
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 012020Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3436
INFO RUEHZU/ASIAN PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHDC

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 000852

SIPDIS

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STATE PASS TO EAP/ANP and EAP/EP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [PARM](#) [PTER](#) [TSPL](#) [APECO](#) [NZ](#)

SUBJECT: APEC 2006 - NEW ZEALAND'S PRIORITIES

REF: SECSTATE 177258

11. (SBU) Summary: New Zealand shares many of the USG's priorities for APEC 2006, Senior Official for APEC, Rupert Holborow told ECONOFF on November 1. Holborow stated that GNZ's number one priority was a successful conclusion to the Doha round and said APEC reforms are needed to keep the organization vital and relevant. Other GNZ priorities include an initiative with Canada on private sector development; GNZ shares the same goals as USG regarding the work of the Counterterrorism Task Force and believes APEC can still be effective in efforts to safeguard food safety and deal with avian influenza. On the issue of extending the moratorium on APEC membership, GNZ is taking its own soundings and will proceed with "caution" but does not yet have a firm position. Prime Minister Helen Clark along with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters and Minister of Defense and Trade, Phil Geoff are all expected to travel to Hanoi to attend APEC. End Summary

New Zealand Priorities

12. (SBU) ECONOFF delivered reftel points regarding USG priorities and unresolved initiatives for APEC 2006 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Trade (MFAT) Senior Official for APEC, Rupert Holborow and APEC Policy Officer, Anthony Simpson on October 26 and received feedback on November 1. Holborow said his government's broad strategic goals were in agreement the USG priorities. He stated that GNZ's number one priority was to urge APEC members to support a successful conclusion to the Doha round and would be pushing for a separate statement to that effect.

13. (SBU) Holborow said that GNZ had been a longtime advocate of a Free Trade Area of the Asian Pacific (FTAAP). He saw this initiative as an APEC response to competing "regional architecture" which he categorized as less inclusive. He said it would be beneficial to develop a work plan to put forward by next year's APEC meeting. He acknowledged that an FTAAP is an ambitious and complicated effort which could encapsulate sixty percent of the world's economy.

14. (SBU) MFAT agrees that APEC reforms are needed to keep the organization vital and relevant. They would like to see the organization professionalize the workforce, rationalize the number of fora, strengthen its research capacities and increase the APEC budget. Holborow said he would like to see the APEC Economic Committee act more as a policy entity and introduce policy reforms. He also noted that by comparison the budget for the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) was larger than APEC.

15. (SBU) Regarding other priority areas, Holborow noted a New Zealand-Canadian initiative on private sector development, and said GNZ would be seeking support for its multiyear work plan in this area. As regards the need to establish a full-fledged Technology

Choice Pathfinder, Holborow would like to see others join and will draw attention to this issue at the meeting. The effort is already producing results for GNZ in detecting false passports. Regarding the work of the Counterterrorism Task Force, GNZ shares the same goals as USG. GNZ also believes APEC can still be effective in efforts to safeguard food and deal with avian influenza. On the issue of extending the moratorium on APEC membership, GNZ is taking its own soundings and will proceed with "caution" but does not have a firm position.

GNZ Participation

16. (SBU) Holborow stated that Prime Minister Clark, Minister of Foreign Affairs Peters, and Minister of Defense and Trade, Geoff would all travel to Hanoi. He said that they were working on timing of meetings between Minister Peters and Secretary Rice, as well as between Minister Geoff and USTR Schwab. He mentioned their hope for a "pull aside" between POTUS and PM Clark.

McCormick